

Harbour to turn it on for maxis

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The fleet of 15 yachts entered for the 14 nautical-mile race features the two leading Sydney-Hobart line honours contenders: Wild Oats XI and Investec Loyal.

The Bureau of Meteorology has forecast south-east to south-westerly breezes of up to 35km/h.

"Sensational," was the reaction of Wild Oats XI's skipper Mark Richards to the blustery forecast.

Bob Oatley, the 83-year-old owner of Wild Oats XI, is expected to steer the boat for part of the race.

The maxi's crew will include at least one newcomer, in Farr 40 world champion Guido Belgiorno-Nettis.

The conditions could prove a challenge to some of Investec Loyal's crew, which includes Paralympic wheelchair racer Kurt Fearnley, Sydney Roosters rugby league star Anthony Minichiello and television personality Karl Stefanovic.